FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

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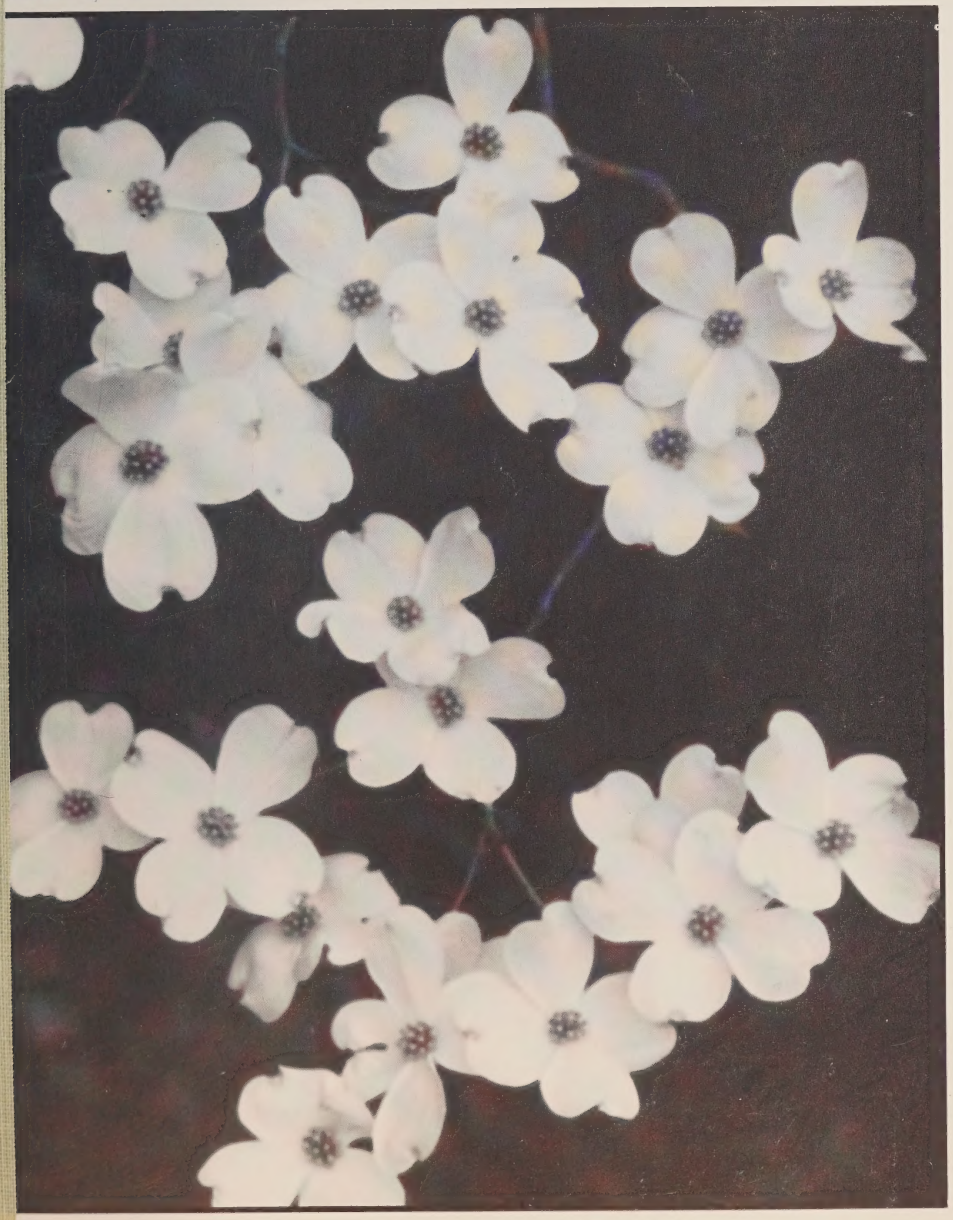
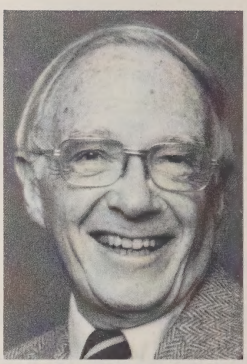


Since 1949 the purpose of Fellowship in Prayer is to promote the practice of prayer among all religious faiths whose fundamental belief is in God regardless of race, creed, or color, and whose tenets include the universal attributes of truth, honesty, justice, and mercy, that thereby there may arise a closer relation to Almighty God and a deeper spirit of fellowship among mankind.

A Message From the President 2
Editor's Introduction 4
Insights 6
Our Lost Connection With Mother Earth, by David Sawyer 7
A Celebration of Earth Spirituality, by Judy Morgan 12
Poetry 16
The Contemplative Life and Turtles, by Rose Marie Walch 19
Inside Old Age, by Robert Granat 24
Ask Angela, by Barbara Ackerman 28
Spirituality and Everyday Life: Swallows' Tale, by Avis Crowe 31
Easter Journey, by Kent I. Groff 34
"A Transforming Experience": Good Medicine at Beaver Dam Creek, by Pat Tracey 36
Prayers 39
Is This the New Humanity?, by William M. Stephens 42
News From Fellowship in Prayer 46
Letters to the Editor 47

Cover Photograph by Tom Dunham



On June 5, the Nassau Club of Princeton, New Jersey, will be the setting for Fellowship in Prayer's 40th Anniversary Dinner. Subscribers to this publication, spiritual leaders of many faiths, friends, trustees, staff members, and well-wishers from all over the country will descend on this beautiful university town to enjoy a festive evening, get to know each other, and reaffirm their belief in the power of prayer to bring about the spiritual renaissance envisioned by our founders. Today, many of us believe more than ever that such a spiritual renewal is essential if we are to help heal Mother Earth and keep it habitable, not only for us but for all of God's creation.

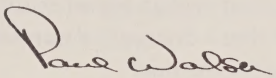
Princeton in the spring is a delight for all lovers of natural beauty. Here, Mother Earth celebrates her annual cycle of renewal and rebirth with a rich profusion of wisteria, magnolias, dogwood, Japanese cherries and countless other flowering trees and shrubs that remind us once again of the glory of God's creation before man "develops" it out of existence.

The Australian ecologist, John Seed, believes, as a result of his intensive, ten-year study of the environmental crises that face us, that we may well be the last generation that has the chance to change the course of events. For that to happen, he says, there has to be a truly profound spiritual change. Is there time for that to happen? Seed believes there is; that spiritual change can be instantaneous, at least on the individual level. What is needed for a mass spiritual change, as he sees it, is not more information about the destruction of the rain forests, the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect, pollution or toxic wastes, but a deep-rooted transformation of our attitudes about ourselves in relation to each other and to all of God's creation.

To this end, Seed has created the immensely moving spiritual event called a "Council of All Beings"—described by Joanna Macy in our February issue—in which participants take the part of plant and animal life and speak to the humans who endanger them. It is his experience that these rituals can generate powerful spiritual experiences and that by allowing one's religious feelings to arise in the context of meditation on

the interdependence of all of creation, one has started on the path of transformation. He sees this ritual that he and others lead as an invitation to commitment; a spiritual activity; a prayer. "I put all my energy," he says, "into my prayer that this beautiful, blue-green planet will keep spinning through space. I also pray," he adds, "that human beings will continue to be a part of it."

I join John Seed and Joanna Macy in that prayer and in the commitment to work toward the healing of Mother Earth. I invite you to do the same, with fond hopes that I will be able to meet and talk with you in Princeton on June 5, at the gala 40th Anniversary Dinner of Fellowship in Prayer. Be sure to fill out and send us the coupon on page 46 of this issue so that we can reserve space for you!



Paul Walsh
President

Bernie Siegel, the New Haven surgeon and author of *Peace, Love, and Healing*, tells the story of a man with a "terminal" illness who loved life too much to die. He had to go on living, the 78-year-old patient said, because "It's springtime. I'm a landscape gardener, and I want to make the world beautiful." Two young men carried his normal workload while he reluctantly took a few weeks off for treatment that was considered unsuccessful. Nevertheless, six years later, long after his physician assumed he had died, the cheerful old gentleman appeared once more in the doctor's office with a relatively minor ailment due to lifting boulders!

What happened to his "fatal" illness? Where did it go? Since science could not explain his astonishing survival and active lifestyle, Dr. Siegel jokes that a disease in a man so impassioned for life must be happy to be along for the ride!

When a reporter interviewed the "incurable" patient about his "impossible" recovery, a casual remark revealed again the elderly gentleman's great love for life: "If I find a little marigold just lying there, I feel so sorry for it I just have to put a hole in the ground with my finger and plant it." I am not at all surprised that today at 84 this lovely man is still on the job, enjoying every moment of his "planting and pruning."

For me the point of Dr. Siegel's story is that *feelings of love and hope prolong life*. A single activity in which one can totally lose oneself and feel the bliss of life is enough to overcome adversity and transform afflictions into gifts. In order to cope with the hard part of our lives, we *have* to find things we love to do: a creative project like writing ones own prayers, an intellectual interest that excites us when we read about it or talk about it, something to do outdoors, or—immensely important—volunteer work of any kind. It has often been observed that a strong relationship exists between selfless service to others and contented longevity. For example, at the end of the nineteenth century, nuns who nursed cholera victims rarely contracted the illness. Today the nuns in Mother Teresa's order expose themselves continually to highly contagious diseases, yet seldom fall ill. Mother Teresa herself is now well into her eighties.

Feelings of love and hope are also associated with finding and following our path. Here absolutely nothing is more effective than prayer and

meditation, since by turning inward to know God and the wisdom of the heart, we learn what we have to do, who we are meant to become, and how we can express the pattern that God imprinted in our souls at birth. C. G. Jung, the prophetic psychoanalyst who understood well the centrality of spiritual development, wrote often that those who stray off their true path fall ill. He would agree with the hundreds of saints who have taught throughout the centuries that at regular intervals each day we need to center ourselves in our hearts to remember the presence of God and our commitment to our path.

It is my prayer that the articles in this edition of *Fellowship in Prayer* will contribute to *your* treasure of hope and love, and will help you to remain or become a person who loves life.

Mary Ford Grabowsky
Editor

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Please do not think we must be solemn in order to meditate. In fact, to meditate well, we have to smile a lot.
Thich Nhat Hanh

Start learning to love God by loving those whom you cannot love. The more you remember others with kindness and generosity, the more you forget yourself, and when you completely forget yourself, you find God.
Meher Baba

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.
Is. 35.7

What I have noticed in my small world is that if I praise the wild flowers growing on the hill in front of my house, the following year they double in profusion and brilliance.
Alice Walker

All things by immortal power,
Near or far,
Hiddenly,
To each other linked, are;
That thou canst not
Stir a flower,
Without the troubling
Of a star.
Francis Thompson

Life's most painful losses can lead to life's most beautiful findings.
Source Unknown

Jahweh is near to the
broken hearted
And helps those whose
spirit is crushed.
Ps. 34.18

Our Lost Connection With Mother Earth

DAVID SAWYER

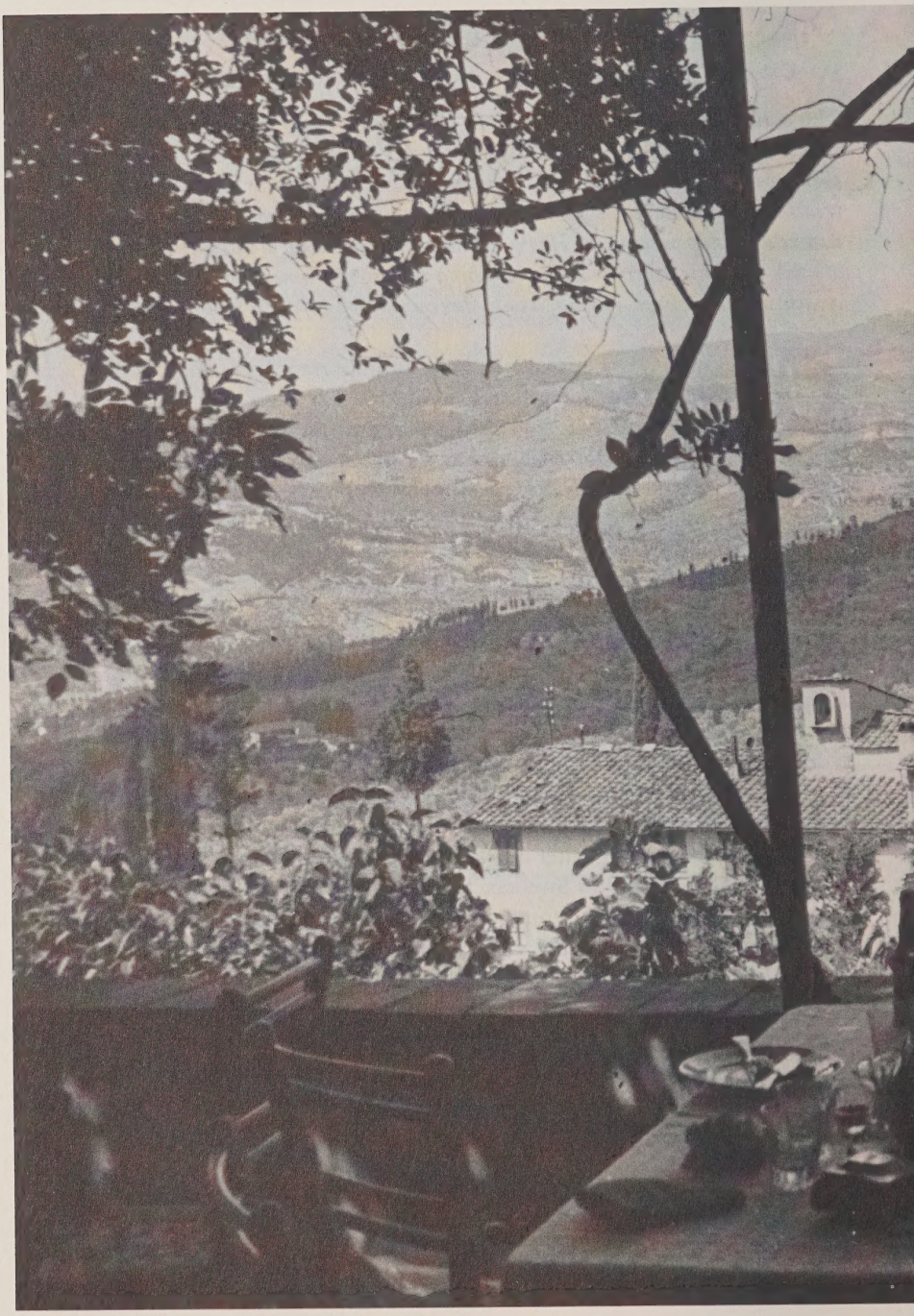
This article comes to you in honor of our Worldwide Day of Prayer of Meditation to Help Heal Mother Earth, to be held on September 23, 1990. The author writes that in opening up to the guilt he was feeling for his insensitive treatment of the earth, he found a place to make amends and start molding a new relationship to creation. He hopes that the story of his own successful struggle will motivate others to start cherishing the divine element in all of God's creatures and to shape a living, day-to-day companionship with Mother Earth.

Composing music has always been an important therapeutic tool for me. An hour spent sitting at the keys is often as cathartic and clarifying, and always much cheaper, then months of couch ridden therapy. When the internal need arises, in a surge of deep emotional images and sensations, a song can virtually erupt from my fingers and voice with no conscious deliberation. Feelings and emotions I had been incapable of consciously expressing flow out as lyrics and chords while the fear, confusion or frustration that had sparked this creative fire is transformed into a musical piece charged with a new awareness.

During the last month, however, my efforts at the piano were neither so easy nor so enlightening. I have been struggling for sometime over a song about the bleak environmental crisis our world is facing. Bits and pieces of melodies and verses would appear but nothing would grow. As half a dozen or so beginnings stood before me, a conscious quagmire clogged my awareness. I wanted to express how I felt about the earth's devastation. For some reason it just would not come out.

Then late one evening, after another unsuccessful jam session, I made a phone call to a friend in Sweden, a person I have always felt close to despite the miles. When I returned to the piano barely had I sat down when the inner doors were unlocked, my hands went on automatic pilot and the conscious labor of a month was erased by an unconscious stream of emotional catharsis I had tapped into. Somehow that simple phone

David Sawyer is a freelance writer and Zen Buddhist in the Pacific Northwest where he claims he devotes most of his time to "writing, living, growing, and correcting spelling mistakes."



Sergio Bonotto

call had sent a message deep inside my shadowy self that opened a channel of expression to feelings hitherto inaccessible.

Throughout that labored and unsatisfying month at the piano I had thought my feelings about our environmental problems were directing me to write a song detailing the disaster, a song that would be a poetic montage of the many issues involved, soundly arguing for ecological survival. But my attempts at this had failed miserably—my hidden feelings, it turned out, did not agree with the conscious plan I had set forth.

The lyrics I did compose painted a much different image and revealed an unsuspected inner motive. This song was not a policy statement for Greenpeace nor was it a declaration of humanity's collective concerns. It was a clear and concise expression of my deep sense of personal sorrow and loss as nature and I drifted apart, separated by a growing list of destructive acts and attitudes.

All my life the earth had been a constant, loving and generous companion. Everthing I was, everything that made my life possible, had come from Mother Earth. As my life drifted away from her and into cars, career, and fast food, our connection began to weaken and deep inside I began to grieve over the foreseeable loss of her sustaining spirit. The unbreakable bond with my Swedish friend opened my conscious heart to the deep, personal connection I have always had with the earth and the pain I was suffering. After that the words, always there though hidden away, just poured out.

The clarity born of my musical therapy has shed new light in many unsuspecting corners of my life. But the transformative quality of the experience has been to reaquaint me with my personal connection to Mother Earth and my need to respond to our global environmental dangers through that connection.

For years I read magazines and listened to news broadcasts discussing the numerous local, national and international environmental issues facing humankind. One week I would learn about radon in the home, the next about the greenhouse effect and the next about Scott Towel mowing down the Malaysian rain forests for tissue paper. With each article my knowledge kept increasing; but as the labyrinth of issues grew to overwhelming proportions I began to shut down. I was lost in the unbelievably synergistic and complicated global crisis. My emotions were so drained it became impossible to respond personally to issues far beyond my experience and my expertise. The massive flood of information had given me a slap in the face and had awoken me to the global extent

of the problems. Yet the enormity of that very realization put the issue on such a grand scale and so far away from me in Brazil, toxic waste sites, or Greenpeace zodiacs, that my own personal environmental crisis was eclipsed.

The experience of writing this song broke through the morass of studies and statistics and opened a space where my heart could respond to it's own pain; a pain growing out of my own choices in lifestyle and behavior. I often feel angry over oil spills in Alaska or want to run for President of Japan to stop their whale hunting. My blood pressure rises, adrenaline flows and I'm ready for action! Without living the realities that prompt such a response, however, soon the fever fades, the news is over and I have returned to my dinner. But to see and feel the earth slipping slowly from my hands as I live, drive and work in artificial environments, eat food that has never seen the sun, and generate unrecyclable waste at every turn, my heart is forever transformed. By placing my life on the examination table I can witness in every act how I embrace and affirm my connection with this sacred living world or how I push her away and contribute to a terminal disease of a suffocating pollution.

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Becoming aware of my connection to the earth has definitely deepened my sorrow and fears. As I see how much my own life hurts the earth and weakens our bond I despair that we shall change our hearts and together survive. But as never before I also feel empowered. I now have a place for hope to be planted and healing to grow. In every opportunity to embrace my connection with the earth I am offered a chance to heal. Every day I can work to mend wounds I have opened and reaffirm my intimate personal connection with nature. Through these acts I can also witness to the need for all of us to make amends for our insensitive, often savage, acts against nature.

Each time I find the courage to so act, nature somehow smiles and warms my insides as if to say, "Thanks for caring." In finishing this essay, the warmth has returned.

A Celebration of Earth Spirituality

JUDY MORGAN

The desperate needs of our dying planet are calling forth the recovery of ancient earth-centered liturgies, as well as the creation of new ones. Here a specialist in "ecological spirituality" presents a liturgy that can be enacted in private homes or places of public worship. If you would like permission to perform the liturgy, telephone (609) 695-3021.

Opening: Chant or song about our relationship to the earth.

Guided Meditation:

Leader: Envision the whole world, our beautiful planet. Let the love and light from your body extend outward in a beam, joining a circle of love and light around the earth, from all the people who seek a peaceful and healthy world. Imagine this love and light going to a place where there is suffering and injustice or pollution and blight. Let the love and wisdom from the circle of light enter the hearts of those involved so that there is a caring resolution of the damage and conflict and oppression. Imagine the love and light bringing peace.

Now imagine the circle of love and light flowing to an area of physical destruction of the earth. Let love and wisdom enter the hearts of those involved so that there is a loving stewardship rather than exploitation of resources.

Now envision your loved ones one by one. Imagine them encircled by the healing light of love so that any physical or emotional pain is lifted away and they are left happy and healthy. Envision your relationship with them as happy, healthy.

Now envision those with whom you are in conflict. Imagine them encircled by the light of love. Let love and wisdom enter your heart so that you can affirm them with love and find a just and harmonious solution to the conflict.

Judy Morgan is an environmental educator currently with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. She is deeply involved in "eco spirituality."

All: May we serve the Earth, our mother, in all our actions.

We celebrate the beauty of our bodies, the perfect expressions of our connection with the earth and all life, the temples of our spirit.

All: May we nurture with care and love our physical being, in all our actions.

We celebrate the love of our family and friends, who nurture us with their love and being.

All: May we be faithful and thoughtful of our loved ones, in all our actions.

We celebrate the difficult times in our lives, which cause us to search and grow in compassion and understanding.

All: May we overcome our difficulties with courage and compassion toward ourselves and others.

We celebrate the times of happiness in which we are close to the harmony, beauty and grace which is the goal of our striving.

All: May we fully enjoy all that life gives us, and follow the path which gives us true joy and peace, in the name of the Spirit and the Earth.

Sharing Of Fruit And Blessings:

Return the light to your body. Envision yourself healthy and happy, enjoying life fully and being fully alive, being an influence for a healthy, peaceful world in whatever is most satisfying to you. Imagine yourself being effective, purposeful. Envision your life being more and more peaceful, more and more healthy, happier and happier over time.

Let yourself rest again into the Earth, feeling her hold you. The Spirit of the Earth and of our deepest selves is always with you. We come from the Earth and we return to the Earth, and she blesses us every day with her beauty. We give her our reverence, Earth of the deepest mysteries and mother of all creatures. We are one with the Earth and with each other. (Silent meditation for 10 minutes.)

Sharing Of Concerns:

Leader: If anyone wants to share a concern or insight, please do so. (After each sharing, all say, "May the light of love and healing guide us and save the earth.")

Dedication:

(Reading of the first part of each section can by done by the leader or rotated from person to person)

We celebrate the beauty of the earth, blue sky and blue waters, majestic mountains and fragile flowers. We share the earth as one people, together with all the animals and plants of her creation.

Leader: If anyone would like to share a blessing, please do so. (After each sharing, all say "We are thankful for the blessings of the Earth and Spirit.")

Leader: We share the fruits of the earth, the fruits of the labor of those who have gone before us, and are thankful. (A bowl of sliced fruit is passed around, followed by a brief meditation.)

Offering:

Leader: May we ever respect and care for the loved ones, the social institutions and the natural environment that sustain our being and need our care. Bless us, Spirit of Light and Love, of the Sky and of the Earth, in all our undertaking. We offer our resources to you and to those who serve you. (If desired, pass a plate for contributions to some relevant organization.)

Closing: A song or chant, followed by:

ALL: Mother Earth,
You are sacred to us.
May we ever be mindful of your needs and power.
Give us each day our food and shelter
And teach us to live simply
Remembering that all your creatures are brothers and sisters to us.
Your rivers and hills are our ancestors who gave us life.
Keep us on the true path
For we are all part of you and of each other.
Amen.

"Enough! the Resurrection,
A heart's clarion! Away grief's gasping, joyless days, dejection.
Across my foundering deck shone
A beacon, an eternal beam. Flesh fade, and mortal trash
Fall to the residuary worm; world's wildfire, leave but ash;
In a flash, at a trumpet crash,
I am all at once what Christ is, since he was what I am, and
This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond,
Is immortal diamond."

Gerard Manley Hopkins

Last Supper

"Come here, my youngest son, I need you now,
Short-handed now it seems this very night
When there's a special supper going on
—About thirteen or so to dine upstairs—
Your brother's taken care of the main meal.
It's simple so there'll be no fault in that
But just in case there's extras that they'll need
Like bread and wine—somehow they both run out
With guests. It's hard to reckon the amount.
I'm asking you to fill this special task
Just sit yourself upon the topmost stair.
Although not in the room. You'll watch with ease
And be alert for any help to give.
I know that you can handle this alone.
A very special supper for a man
I most admire and truly wish to please."

And so I sat upon the topmost stair.
They had arrived, a friendly jovial group
Of men, all closely knit, a happy time.
I was so proud, excited to be there
And wished that I could be among the guests.

But then a cloud a sadness settled down,
Some sudden sort of trouble, an upset.
I felt fright and alarm. What could it be?
An ominous sense of doom ran through my heart.
One guest ran out, pushed past me down the stairs.
Oh! Should I call my father? Something's wrong.

They came a sense of peace, but not of joy.
The party now took on a solemn tone;
A holiness that seemed to fill the air
As in the temple. I could scarcely breathe.
I felt my father's inn was being blest
It was hard to understand, a lad of ten,
And yet I knew that God was somewhere there
And blessing me upon the topmost stair.

Rosella Kenny Donlan

Sanctus (Before the Sacrament)

Again we are invited to His feast,
the chalice filled with wine, the broken bread.
We come, the proud, the mighty and the least,
all hungry children, needing to be fed.
The minister intones, "Lift up your hearts."
Then we respond, "We lift them Lord, to Thee."
The music of the Sanctus softly starts
and choral voices praise His deity.
Head bowed, we listen while the voices swell
and penetrate each winter-weary soul,
as though the notes had power to dispel
all doubt, to touch our spirits, make us whole.
The music fades to silence and restored,
we celebrate the passion of the Lord.

Emma S. McLaughlin

Song of Spiritual Experience

All living beings with happiness for themselves, but many do not look
to its root.
Some see the root, but the forces of apathy bind them and they
foolishly waste their precious time.
They do not look to their minds, instead letting their attention flow to
whatever occurs.
It is far better to take control of your life, to look inside and make your
supports the pillars of mindfulness and awareness.

The mind is like a horse, its bit difficult to steer;
Holding the reins close brings about inner peace.
Place the body, speech and mind in gentleness:—
Cherish this advice praised by the sages.

Merely hearing of pain is difficult,
So how much harder to have to endure it.
Suffering is a crazed dance caused by inner turmoil;
Its root is our own inner distortion and our lack of vision,
not outer conditions.
Abandon preconceptions, and examine the nature
of the flow of your own thoughts.

These are but a few droplets drawn forth
From the ocean of spiritual lore.
It is my good fortune to have the honor to sprinkle them here,
And I offer the prayer that they may act as a condition
Ripening the seeds of world peace and happiness.

Gungbar Tulku

The Contemplative Life and Turtles

ROSE MARIE WALCH

Everything in the universe has something to teach us about God. Take Mervin, for example . . .

Writing and art are solitary professions—an ideal combination for a would-be anchorite, since one calls for meditation, the other contemplation. In a society obsessed with activism, I require no excuse to retreat to my cell. Nor do I need to explain to an uncomprehending world that my life style is a matter of spiritual, rather than professional, choice. Indeed, I need not speak at all. My work speaks for me.

And so I am free to enjoy solitude. But solitude, if misunderstood, can be a dangerous gift. It must not be confused with solitariness. To be solitary is to be alone—an unnatural condition for the human species. It may be forced upon an individual by circumstance. Or it may be elected as an escape from a threatening world. A healthy contemplative life, on the other hand, is freely chosen. And, as Thomas Merton repeatedly warned, anyone who embarks on it to escape the rigors of the world is in for a bumpy trip.

The contemplative state is not a retreat, but an advance. It is a concentrated effort to BE with God. One leaves nothing behind. All that we are (the good and the bad), all that we know, love, and desire goes with us. And because we have chosen an Intimate Who is all-powerful, we place our own needs and the needs of a broken world before This One, usually in trusting silence. The one thing a contemplative is *not*, is alone.

One need not live in cloister to be contemplative. A somewhat secluded life like mine is helpful, because it reduces distraction. But with grace and dedication, contemplation can be achieved in the midst of an active life. Such was the case with Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. What is necessary is to cultivate an abiding awareness of God's Presence, within and without. Or, as ascetic writers would put it, to practice the Presence of God. The fact is, for better or for worse, we become like those with whom we associate. We come to think as they do, share their

Well known for the spiritual quality of her bronze sculpture and poetry, Rose Marie Walch lives in Pennsylvania. She is the author of Sonnets From the Studio.

desires, imitate their behavior. In essence, this is the goal of the contemplative.

Nevertheless, it's a busy world. As long as we're in it, there will always be matters that demand our attention. And until we manage to maintain unbroken awareness, we must return, again and again, to the Divine Presence. We soon learn that the practice of God's Presence is a discipline that requires tenacity and perseverence.

Such strength and purpose must be sustained, and its most nourishing food is the word of God. Scripture is so necessary to me that some years ago I committed the Sermon on the Mount and the Discourse after the Last Supper to memory. I'm working now on Isaiah, starting with Chapter 40. Were it possible, I'd memorize the whole of it. As it is, I'd like to get as far as the passage that reads, "Even to your old age I am the same, even when your hair is gray I will bear you; It is I who have done this, I who will continue, and I who will carry you to safety." Isaiah 46.4. I'm doing this to prepare myself for the possibility that I may one day suffer from the glaucoma that afflicted my father. Blindness would be difficult indeed, if, along with my sight, I lost the ability to savor the Word.

But our access to God's Word is not limited to Scripture. As John writes, "In the beginning was the Word; the Word was in God's presence, and the Word *was* God. He was present to God in the beginning. Through him all things came into being, and apart from him nothing came to be." John 1.1-3.

Understood in this sense, the Word is different from and infinitely more encompassing than its Scriptural expression. It is the Divine *Logos* in which all that is has being. It then follows that all creation bears the mark of the Creator—just as a potter's ware bears his or her characteristic mark. The golden glow of the sunset reflects God's glory. The flight of an eagle in the heights suggests God's majesty. The quake of the earth beneath our feet, the roar of a tornado twisting toward us, the force of a volcano as it spews forth lava—all are mere suggestions of the infinite power of God. And yet, by the same token, the fawn struggling to its feet tells me about divine innocence, about a God, forever young, in the on-going act of creation. The scent of the honeysuckle carries God's sweetness on the wind; the rose unfurls to discover His beauty.

Time and space reveal God's purposes. People and events, animate beings and inanimate objects—all carry His message. The universe is the open book of the living Word. I have only to study it with divine aware-

Sergio Bonotto

ness. Then, the most unlikely and unassuming creatures can teach me, if I am willing to learn.

Take Mervin, for example. Mervin is a Carolina box turtle. (We named her before we discovered she was a lady.) One of my sons brought her home from a trip to the woods ten years ago. According to the ridges on her shell, she was over thirty years old. My misgivings about keeping her were dispelled as time went by. Aside from insisting on a long winter nap, she seemed to accommodate well to apartment life. Moreover, she displayed rare intelligence and a surprising degree of recognition and affection.

I thought of her one night, driving home from North Dakota. As I pondered the turtle's nature through Kentucky and West Virginia, a poem began to form. I've never published it. But I'd like to share it now, because it sums up much of what I've said.

The Anchorite

The turtle is a seemly soul.
Her words are few, her manner quiet.
When life grows complex all about,
The turtle tends to simplify it.

She bears her cell around with her.
It keeps her safe in time of danger,
And serves for still another use
Whose processes are even stranger.

For when the turtle has her fill
Of sights and sounds and voices strident,
She just withdraws into her shell—
A blessing of the Order Trident.

One cannot say what she reflects;
Her attitude gives no suggestion.
Perhaps she simply contemplates
And rests in God without a question.

But when the time arrives to act,
She shows a persevering nature.
Tenacious? Stubborn? Ponderous?
She's not concerned with nomenclature.

The turtle, when she ambles forth
To reach a goal of her selection,
Turned in this way, swiveled that,
Reverts to her conceived direction.

She seems to be impregnable—
Too hard to hurt, too tough to kill.
Or does her anchorage produce
Her peace of mind, her strength of will?

A paradox . . . Stripped of her shell,
The turtle stands without defense,
Helpless, naked, sensitive,
A thing of little consequence.

And so she lugs her load about,
Her way secure, her spirit fertile,
And wakes to greet each new-born day
With thanks. How good to be a turtle!

After I got home, I decided to return Mervin to the wild, where she belonged. She'd taught me a lot. I owed her that. So I took her up to Lake Arthur and set her down on a hidden path in the lush underbrush. She made no move to leave while I stood there, so I gathered my fishing gear and walked off a few paces.

"You're free, Merv," I said, "Go with God."

She stretched her neck, raised her head high above her shell, and took in the surroundings. Then, if ever a turtle smiled, she did. After an hour or so of fishing, I passed the spot on my way back to the car. I looked around, but she was nowhere to be seen . . .

Vaya con Dios, Mervin.

Inside Old Age

ROBERT GRANAT

It's finally happened. After all these years—all? they don't *seem* so many—that hovering eventuality has landed on this present actuality. Idea has condensed into being. Mine. My turn to be old. I see it in the mirror and feel it in the bones. Supermarket kids want to carry my groceries for me. Age is off someday no longer; it's on today with me.

And so? . . . well really, so what? Age keeps happening all the time.

Yes, but not to me. Nor, come to think of it, to anybody else either. Not one of us has ever been old before. Old for us is new.

But I'm here to speak from age not about it, and I mention mine only by way of credentials, as evidence I know my topic. And I do—my cerebral cortex does, I mean, knows it the way the cortex knows things, as another bit of objective data, accurate but exterior somehow, extraneous almost. Inside, subjectively—where I'm mostly to be found—I really don't know what I'm talking about. Because from in here this old age looks no different from any other age I've been: I can see it all right, stuck out there on my mental surfaces, where it remains, oddly insoluble. My mind just can't ingest it, not even when, as now, I rap my skull sharply with my knuckles trying to knock some numerical sense inside. And how can I metabolize it when being, the naked touch of life, feels exactly the same to me now as it's been since birth?

What is it, this paradox, this strange bifocal knowing our human awareness is heir to? To know yourself clearly as age-bound while knowing yourself even more clearly as age-free? It's not just some private idiosyncrasy of mine, certainly, one neurotic individual's denial and flight from truth. It's a public one, standard to the genus, a normal and commonplace human phenomenon, and perhaps a flight *toward* truth. It's what made Soren Kierkegaard declare—in defiance and transcendence of the spirit of our age—that truth is *sub*, not *ob*jectivity, that the facts of temporality—years, bodies, statistics, all multiplicities—are eternally false. Because "eternity never counts." In the beginning was *not* the Number and the Number was not with God. No clocks, no databanks, in heaven. No ages either, young, middle or old.

Robert Granat, a writer and artist who makes his home in New Mexico, is a regular contributor to FiP *and one of our readers' favorite authors.*

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If you, too, find *Fellowship in Prayer* "a joy and inspiration" to read, won't you take a moment to read and fill in the other side of this page?

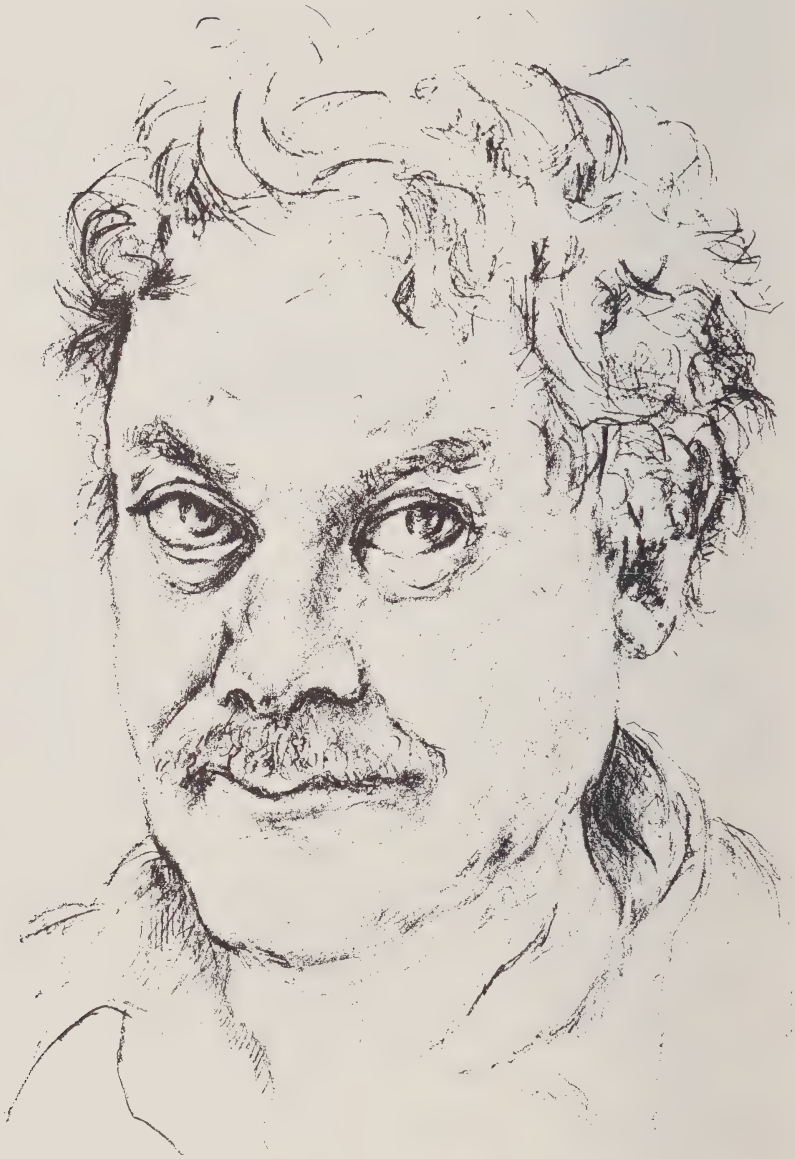
Paul Walsh
President
Fellowship in Prayer

Not in heaven. You and I, however—as of this writing and reading, at least—are on earth. And earthlings face earthly facts, foremost of which—to our special awareness—are those of flux, change, impermanence. Nothing lasts on earth, including the earth itself. All forms unform. All organisms disorganize. All living creatures, you and me among them, age and die. One may be young but one will be old . . . maybe. Since this uniquely human foreknowledge of death hands us the key to the meaning of human life, by my age and stage we'd better be thinking of dying or we'll miss the whole point of living. Of course, it's never too early to start. Prince Siddhartha was 29 when he stepped from his Eden of innocence only to get jumped by the facts of life—sickness, old age, death—that wait in ambush for us all. In his case the trauma was so powerful it drove him out of childhood through adulthood and on to Buddhahood—creating a world religion as a side-effect.

Inspiring legend, enduring myth. But Buddha was the hero of some poetic there-and-then, while we're only us in this prosey here-and-now. I'm me and you're you. We're us, not Buddha.

No? According to Buddha we are: "Look within," he said, "You are the Buddha." Or, as Christ phrased it, "You shall be as Gods." You, they both said. And who is you? It's us!

Century after century our race has sensed the truth—which is why we still venerate these as saviors while forgetting so many others. Because they were right. We *are* as Gods, we *are* the Buddha, the way our sages and seers keep repeating to us. We are, but we don't really believe them, can't believe because we can't understand. To us it's the height of arrogance and presumption to equate ourselves—whom we know all too intimately as these unsteady, uncertain, unfinished creatures—with God or Buddha. The height of irrationality too. And it is, we're correct about that. What we're wrong about is this: who we are. We define ourselves too small. We think we're these isolated bodyselves, one of the billions of warm parcels of sentient-conscient pleasure-loving flesh, endlessly being delivered to earth for God knows what reason, only to discover, that we're painfully, hopelessly vulnerable to manifold contingency, and must fall victim, one by one, to the cold laws of biophysics. No wonder we're so anxious, no wonder we spend so much of our vitality struggling to survive—knowing all the while that not one of us has ever survived yet, not under this bodyself definition. Not too rational of us either. Less rational even than our lowly cousins, the cockroaches, say, who act the



A Self-portrait by Robert Granat

same way, but more reasonably, being blessedly ignorant of the deadly side of life. As they are blessed with ignorance, we have been blessed with knowledge. We know a good deal more about cockroaches than they know about themselves. Nevertheless they're all perfectly cockroach already, while we've yet to become perfectly human.

Which is why we're here on earth. "You must therefore be perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect."

We've been sent to this sphere on a unique assignment: to perfect our humanity. And that, given our complexities, given our weaknesses, seems like an utterly impossible job. No matter the seeming. We're here to do it. We've been genetically and environmentally provided with everything we need to do *our* part—which is all we're asked to do. "Ours is to try." Like planting a seed, impossible is possible only because the rest somehow "does itself." We too have been "sown," we bear the living germ of self-realization. The universe itself wills our perfection. And what the universe wills gets done!

Perfect humanity knows who it is. Knows *Who* it is. And acts accordingly. The boundless energy and intelligence of the universe has materialized into a human bodyself and appeared on this viable planet, so that we might realize that. Realize *That*. Realize *That* the only way we can—as *This*, the Kingdom of God within. Then the facts of earth reenter the truth of heaven and bodyself drops like a spent booster rocket.

In contrast to that objective reality, age, this subjective knowing looks realer to me than I do to myself. It's not something I've acquired, it's more something I've recognized. It's not the result of long years of study. It's more an instinctive, in-born knowing, just like the cockroach's, just like life's, which runs its incredibly intricate networks so beautifully without any schooling at all.

Such is our marvelous human assignment. Or, more accurately, it's only one man's words about it, the best one aging and limited bodyself package is able to think, sense and say about this enigmatic existence of ours. Nothing but a semi-educated guess, of course, and "he who speaks does not know." When I do know for sure I won't think, sense or say anything. I won't have to.

Ask Angela

BARBARA ACKERMAN

Dear Angela,

I hope that you can help me with a question that keeps coming into my head late at night. At the present time, I live across an ocean from many of the people, places and things that mean most to me. I keep trying to feel comfortable in my new place, but the images, scents and inner sights of my old place keep haunting me even though I know things always weren't so great there. My question is this: How do you get over being homesick and grieving for a past (mostly the people) that may or may not have been as you remember it?

Gratefully,
Susan

Dear Susan,

Thank you for taking the time to write to me, and for your question. Homesickness is a very hot topic with me these days because my family and I have recently moved. My new living quarters are quite spiffy. I have my very own room complete with private entrance, a couch for entertaining company, and even a washer and dryer. I have a lovely backyard filled with fresh scents that occupy my waking hours. With all this, I too have a question that pops into my head late at night: Can we go home now? I am told that this is homesickness and that there is no cure for it. I have spent several afternoons lying on my new comforter, trying to come up with words of solace that both of us can use.

First, I am assuming that in your case, when you left your old life for a new one you were following the intensified twitching of your nose. Your nose *was* twitching, wasn't it? If by following your nose you ended

up across an ocean, be assured that you made the appropriate choice for you, even if at times it feels wrong or brings you pain. Knowing that you made the proper choice can be a great source of comfort to you in the painful moments. Feel free to use it.

With my own homesickness, I try to remember that we were not put here on earth to suffer. Our lives were not meant to be solely about getting a flea bath. We are here to discover what purpose our souls have, and to discover what will help the soul grow, flourish, and express itself. We have our hearts, our guts, and our noses to help us. By trusting and following the wisdom of each, we are able to navigate more smoothly and serenely toward our soul's fulfillment and the blessings that life offers us.

When homesickness strikes, I dig my way into a cozy crevice of my comforter and fluff up the sides around me. I have not figured out as yet how to roll myself up *into* my comforter, but I'm working on it. In the past, I have discovered that sleeping with the covers up over my head can be a great source of safety and peace.

When I am safely settled, I will then pray. I pray for a visit from my friend Barbara, or the quick return of any family member. I pray for peace and most importantly, for the grace I need to carry on. Then, I roll over.

I have found that praying is an excellent way to spend time. My prayer doesn't have to be an elaborate one, nor do I have to stop what I am doing. When I pray for grace, I notice very often that the feeling of grace flows through me shortly afterwards and homesickness eases. Prayer certainly works wonders, especially when you *notice* that it has.

I have found also that homesickness eases when I go with it completely. I get into it. I give in. When I totally accept the way things are without judgement, I feel better and have more energy for bliss.

Let me point out to you that when you followed the intensified twitching of your nose, you knew exactly what you wanted and needed. I hope by now you realize you have received both. When you turn out the light, acknowledge that you have received and are still receiving all that you asked for. This is by no means a cure for feeling homesick, but 'fessing up to the truth always helps.

I understand fully the pain you feel about leaving some friends behind for one best beloved friend. Choosing is painful, isn't it? I too have experienced this very same push and pull. There have been times on my

walks with Barbara when I have felt homesick for my family after just ten minutes, and have led Barbara back to my own front door. In the days before I had my own room for entertaining, I was ruling out the possibility of spending more time with my friend. I hated to disappoint her, but I had to do what I had to do to make myself feel better. It is this way with all of us. We all have to do what we have to do to reach peace. Guilt about hurting someone's feelings can trick us into thinking our choices are mistakes. Don't be fooled. Following your nose wherever it leads is the surest way to stay on the path that is right for you.

When I was out walking with Barbara and got homesick and she wouldn't follow me home fast enough, I would bolt from her, dash across the street, and bark at my front door. Yes, there have been times when in a pinch, running away has done wonders for alleviating my homesickness. I do not suggest this particular solution to you in your situation.

I hope I have been of some help to you and to all those wrestling with homesickness.

Faithfully,
Angela

Swallows' Tale

AVIS CROWE

Hannah Moore died before she had known life. Nat and Marah had eagerly anticipated the birth of their third child. There were serious complications in the early months of pregnancy, but after a series of fetal transfusions, it appeared that the crisis had passed. I saw Marah early in her sixth month and she glowed with good health and contentment. A few days later, Marah reported for what she expected to be the final transfusion. During the course of the by-then routine procedure, something went wrong. The horrified young mother watched her baby's heartbeat on the ultrasound go flat. The baby was dead. I was deeply moved when I learned that Nat and Marah had given their girl-child a name, had held her lifeless form before she was taken away. Both seemed to me profoundly courageous acts.

A week later, at the couple's request, a pot-luck meal and memorial service were held at the Quaker Meeting House. A large number of people, members and attenders of the Meeting as well as friends and relatives of the Moores, broke bread together. Many of us had never met before, but we were united in our care for Marah and Nat, in our need to share their loss, and for one evening we became a community. Following the meal, we moved into the Meeting Room, sat in a triple circle around a table with fresh-cut flowers bathed in shimmering light from the many candles we had all been asked to bring. In the deep silence and spoken messages, we participated in the process of grieving and healing. The easy comings and goings of Nat and Marah's pair of active little boys kept us in touch with the energy and exuberance of life, even as we mourned the death of their tiny sister. As I drove home from the service, I pondered this paradox of living and dying so closely connected.

The next morning I awoke and glanced out the french doors to the portale. Something wasn't right. It was a while before I realized what it was: a swallows' nest had fallen from one of the overhead beams and was lying on the brick floor below. The nest had been built by a late nesting pair. I had watched in wonder as the birds made endless trips to and from

Avis Crowe is a writer living in New Mexico.

the river's edge, each time brining tiny beakfuls of mud, painstakingly adding them to the foundation, singing brightly as though enormously pleased with their work. Gradually, a sturdy adobe structure was in place. The swallows set about lining it with twigs and grasses, even draping a few horse hairs over the edge. Finally, they brought small white feathers for an inner cushion so the newly hatched birds would have a soft, warm place to begin their lives. I looked at their elegant little home lying shattered on the ground, the dried clay wall broken, exposing the inner layers of twigs and feathers. The carefully constructed nest would never serve its intended purpose; the swallow pair would no doubt disappear from our lives. I felt sad.

I left things as they were so a visiting granddaughter might see the remains before I swept them away. When she awoke, we went out together. Looking more intently than I had at first, I saw that the nest had been occupied. Two hatchlings, scarcely the size of my thumb, lay curled and lifeless in the crumbled mud. A third was only half out of its shell. Tears sprang to my eyes and I felt a little foolish as the earlier sadness

deepened. I experienced a surprisingly strong sense of loss for these tiny creatures that would never soar on the wind or engage in the aerial acrobatics that seemed to be such a special gift of swallows. Suddenly I thought of Nat and Marah and Hannah, and realized I was grieving for them, too . . . grieving for all premature loss of life and lives not fully lived in spite of the gift of years. I gathered the fragile little bodies in a trowel and buried them beneath the Mimosa tree in our backyard. I marked the place with a small, flat stone.

I did not expect to see the swallows again. But they stayed on, though for the next day or two they seemed disoriented. They flew in circles, then would leave for a while, returning to the nesting site as if not quite sure what had happened, or what to do next. Quite suddenly they seemed to recover and began to rebuild. Back and forth to the river, daubing the bits of mud on precisely the same spot as before. In a few days a brand new nest was in place, this one somewhat smaller and more compact than the original, as though they had consulted some avian architect in order to correct their earlier miscalculations.

Sitting on our portale swing I had a good view and I watched the birds line the new nest and listened with satisfaction to the busy pair's warbling. Soon they would add the final touch of feathers and the downy space would be ready. Would this one hold, I wondered? Or was it too late in the season? Was this an exercise in instinctive behaviour that must be carried out even without result? Even as I asked myself these questions, I realized that I didn't need to know the answers, that they didn't matter.

What DID matter was what a brave young couple and a pair of swallows poignantly reminded me: that perseverance and courage are present in all living beings. That there is an energy deep within that girds us in the confusing aftermath of chaos and sets us back on the path of growth. It is the instinct for life, for moving out of the darkness toward the light. It is a spirit I call God.

EMMAUS JOURNEY THROUGH PENTECOST
EASTER PARADOX

On Emmaus road
At Easter's close
Comrades traversing
Begin conversing

Trek from city
Country to town
Body language
Primary speech.

Pilgrims sojourn
Footsteps commune
Outward progress
Inward process:

April's hopes now
Winter's despair
Buried hero
Savior no more.

Wandering away
While being pursued
Two friends go afar
As stranger draws near.

Camouflaged Christ joins
Grieving companions
Knows Friday's cross
Yet seems not to know.

Sad footsteps cease
Still silence speaks.
Jesus questions
Doubters answer: "Women's story

Hosts implore guest:
Day is far spent
Inward light glows
Westward sun fades

Go on farther.
Visitor's goal
Disciples' goal
Draw near village

Suffering glory.
Giving meaning to
Moses, prophets
Mercy, justice

But spirit of Law:
Not the letter
Concerning self
Points beyond text

Bound to suffer."
"Messiah was just
Pilgrim explains
Anonymous still

Then be seeing?"
Can believing
Is believing
If true seeing

Tomb is riddle:
Tale of empty
Amazes men.

The Gospel According To
LUKE THE PHYSICIAN
(Chapters 24, 10, 2 and Acts 1, 2)

To read, let the eye travel the road down, then up, then down and up again.

© KENT I. GROFF 1989

POWER FROM ON HIGH
CHRIST ON THE CROSS

"Stay with us here."
Travelers weary
Enter hostel
Restore the soul.

Sitting at table
Rising to serve
Stranger is friend
Guest becomes host:

Taking to bless
Breaking to give.
Tasting they see
Scriptures feeding,

Breaking of loaf
Healing for soul.
Closed eyes open
Hearts strangely warm.

Camouflaged guest
Is risen Christ!
Concealed in flesh
Revealed in bread,

History containing
Mystery explaining
Vanishing Lord
Present evermore.

Rise the same hour
Rest without sleep,
Gathering as one
In Jerusalem

Risen in deed
Crucified word
Of ordinary deeds,
Miraculous speech
In common walking
Compassion talking

Forever new!
Forgiveness now
Actions speaking
Doing, telling

Flock believing
Folk repenting
Community's born
Out of solitude

Center and ending.
Inn the beginning
Discovered in stranger
Covered in manger

Now open secret
In broken bread
Mystery of love
Messiah's alive:

Ecstasy now!
Then is silence
Morning's gladness
Evening's sadness

Adventure secure.
Journey is home
To all the world:
To scatter abroad

Good Medicine at Beaver Dam Creek

PAT TRACEY

Please send the story of your own "transforming experience" to the Editor, FiP, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.

If you walk Comanche and turn on to Cohocton to its southern end, you find yourself at Beaver Dam Creek, a quiet branch of the Metedeconk. On a good day, Great Spirit may surprise you with Osprey who occasionally fish here. Sometimes they simply perch in the trees which line the water's edge.

My eyes scanned the tree line. Snowy Egrets were stalking for an afternoon snack, Kingfisher helicoptered and dove for his catch. But no Osprey in the neighborhood today.

Then I heard it. Steady and regular like a beeper's call. A "peep, peep, peep" crying in the wilderness. But who was the peeper and where could he be found?

No sooner had I asked the question, than from the corner of my eye I noticed Mother Mallard coming out of the shadows along the water's edge followed by her clutch of seven recently-hatched little ones. Awkwardly but successfully climbing over gravel, they kept up with Mother. I realized this was no ordinary "peep"; this was a distress call. I was witnessing a search-and-rescue party in action. Time to join.

Mother Mallard nervously paced before me. I saw no signs of life under or around the pines which lined the end of Chocomoton, even binoculars failed me. Then I saw it: the sewer. Could it be? Of course, that's why Mother and brood hovered in the area. I found Duckling frantically swimming in the high waters of its prison. After clearing away debris from the sewer grate, I had a better view of the tiny victim. Total panic bundled in downy feathers is all I could see as I tried to corner Duckling into salvation. Didn't he know that I was bringing rescue? His delicate softness shook within my cupped hand as I gently grasped him and returned him to the creek. Within an instant, Duckling jet propelled to

Pat Tracey chairs the Department of Religious Studies at Christian Brothers Academy in Lincroft, NJ. She enjoys birding and all types of nature observation.

Pat Tracey

join the waiting family. Mother Mallard turned to me. She sounded two soft "quacks." I said "you're welcome," and began walking home.

Instantly, I was struck. WOW! This is Good Medicine, an experience so profound that you just know it's a gift from the Spirit-who-moves-through-all-things. Joy ran through me. Tenderness for all creation seized my being. I felt as though I had come upon a great secret, feeling very alive. Life has meaning.

It was easy to interpret the meaning of this experience for myself. Isn't God always rescuing us from those proverbial sewers of life? Wasn't this Creator's way of reminding me of unconditional love and providence? But then, from another space, from an Other One came a more searching realization.

A deeper voice helped me to realize that God reaches those who cry through those of us who have eyes to see and ears to hear. "Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord," but how can help come if sisters and brothers don't hear or see one's plight? That's it. That's what this moment reveals and affirms.

All creation moans and groans for redemption. More than ever, humankind can and must do God's work before we all perish. To be in the right place at the right time, and to refuse to act is intolerable. To become aware of the myriad ways in which Mother Earth is dying, and not to

come to her aid, is matricide. To know that innumerable children, women, and men around the globe are crushed by poverty and powerlessness and not to care, is crucifixion. To act, to care, to join the search-and-rescue party is invigorating, compassionate, and life-giving. It's resurrection. Time to join.

Thank you, Great Spirit, for Good Medicine.

Prayer of Trust

Be with us, Lord, as we journey toward You.
Be our constant companion on our path
  helping us over the exposed branches
    of our weaknesses.
Provide us with strength as we climb the steep hills
  of uncertainty and doubt.
Guide our feet so that we might learn
  to place more trust in You
    in making each of our decisions,
  and help us see in each choice
    that what we are really choosing
      is to rest in Your love.

Increase our acceptance of Your will in our lives.
We pray that we continue to accept
  the joy, the pain, the love and the partings
    that You send us,
Knowing that by seeing the good in each situation
  Your light will continue to guide us
    safely to You.

May our will be to live as You want us to live,
so that each of us may someday be the person
that You have always intended for us to be.
Marianna Kane Neal

Prayer Written After the Birth of a Daughter

Like golden leaves
of the loveliest autumn,
falling from the clearest
bluest skies,
the golden leaves of grace

If you would like your favorite prayer to appear in FiP, *please send it to The Editor, Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.*

signs of forgiveness,
are falling into my trembling heart.

My Lord, I will be silent,
wait only for your light.

Quietness and enchantment.
The golden waters.
The radiant, crystal clear skies.

Oh, blessed silence!
Mysterious wonder . . .

I know you have been near!
I know you have just passed by!
You touched my spirit.
So gently.
Could it have been a dream?
Could it have been your promise?
Could it have been your call?
A sign marking me forever,
as your own, your very own?

Whenever I may wander, You must—
Oh! promise! always bring me back!

Oh blessed silence!
Luminous wonder!
The lightest, most tender touch!

I know, there comes awakening.
The way is still so long
and troubled.
But I will keep my longing.
Remembrance.
And I will keep my dream.

My Lord, I will be silent.
Wait only for your Word
and coming.

Marie Schroter

Help Us

Way down under where the wishes grow
and ancient dreams abide,
Something born way long ago
Hunts for answers, longs to know,
And cries out in the night:

Tell me why the stones are silent,
Why the stars don't scream,
As they watch us drifting dumbly
In a frightened dream.

Wake us from this blighted slumber,
Teach us how to grow,
How to find a blazing YES
In this strange night of NO.

Keep our heart from winter-dying,
Help us as we strive
To find the music in the madness
And keep our love alive.

Betty Lord

Is This the New Humanity?

WILLIAM M. STEPHENS

Everyone will agree that 1989 was an astounding and unprecedented year. A time of catastrophes, victories, tragedies, heroism, grief, and tumultuous joy. For many, a time of spiritual renewal. We saw bitter enemies shake hands and even embrace. We saw millions of people come together in a spirit of freedom and cooperation.

More and more of us are beginning to suspect that what we are seeing is more than a series of dramatic and unrelated events. What is happening may be even more significant than surface events would indicate. Could it be that the world is going through the throes, convulsions, and ecstasies of an approaching rebirth? The dawn of a new era in world civilization?

It might surprise you to learn that the phenomenal events of 1989 were foreseen (in a sense, blueprinted) by a great spiritual master, Avatar Meher Baba, more than 50 years ago. In his classic volume, *Discourses of Meher Baba*, written and first published in the late '30s, he told of the dawning new age which he called "The New Humanity."

Out of the agony and travail of wars and natural catastrophes, he said, will come a great period of world peace and prosperity, an era when cooperation will replace competition; when science and religion will march forward hand in hand; when selfless service will replace selfishness; when tremendous spiritual growth will occur. Humankind will take a quantum leap in consciousness from the age of reason to the age of intuition, just as we once moved from instinct to reason. The world will recognize the unity of all life and the basic oneness of all religions. We will realize that rituals, rites, ceremonies, and sectarian differences are unimportant and unnecessary, and that only the love of God *is* important. All religions will come together like beads on a string.

The New Humanity, Meher Baba said, "shall be ensouled not by dry

William M. Stephens, a Tennessee attorney, has researched for 20 years the life and teachings of Avatar Meher Baba for a book he is writing.

THE HIGHER AND BROADER THE IDEAL, THE BETTER. FOR, AS HIGH AND BROAD YOUR IDEAL IS, SO HIGH AND BROAD YOU TOO BECOME.

SRI SRI THAKUR

Gisela Lichtgarn

intellectual doctrines but by living spiritual experience." The force that brings this about will be love, simply love. God, the innermost dweller in every heart, will infuse us with divine love.

In other words, none of us, collectively or individually, can take credit for this great world awakening. It will not be brought about by any kind of human plan, movement, conspiracy, or doctrine. None of us started it and none of us can stop it. It is all a part of God's divine plan to bring about a fresh dispensation of love and truth to a worn, weary, and hungry world.

But while we cannot bring it about, we can utilize the force behind it. "Love has to spring spontaneously from within," says Meher Baba. "It is in no way amenable to any form of inner or outer force. Love and coercion can never go together; but while love cannot be forced upon anyone, it can be awakened through love itself. Love is essentially self-communicative; those who do not have it catch it from those who have it. Those who receive love from others cannot be its recipients without giving a response that, in itself, is the nature of love.

"True love is unconquerable and irresistible. It goes on gathering power and spreading itself until eventually it transforms everyone it touches. Humanity will attain a new mode of being and life through the free and unhampered interplay of pure love from heart to heart."

Sounds simple, doesn't it? Simplistic, many would say. So does the Sermon on the Mount sound simplistic to skeptics!

But no matter, says Meher Baba. God does His own work. God doesn't need preachers and teachers. God only needs human hearts that are hungry for love and truth. And in this "heartless" and mechanistic age, there are many hungry hearts, ready to be purged of selfishness and greed, ready to be enlivened with God's divine love.

Don't misunderstand. I'm not saying we are there yet. Far from it, perhaps. But the first rays of dawn's early light are shafting across the skies of our lives; and many of us have become aware that something wonderful and special beyond words is happening in the world.

It may yet be a long time coming. Some people will continue to preach doom and damnation. There will be many to assert that all this talk about love and light is just nonsense. There will be cries for bigger bombs and bigger armies.

But, "Don't worry, be happy," as Meher Baba told us decades before his words were appropriated by Bobby McFerrin to produce a number

one hit song. The world is in good hands, and the universe is unfolding according to plan.

Not just Meher Baba's plan, but the plan of Jesus Christ, and of Abraham, of Buddha, Mohammed, Krishna, Zoroaster, and other great world teachers. It is all One Plan, and everyone who is even partly awake at this exciting time in history can watch it unfold like the petals of a lotus blossom.

A major event of 1990 for Fellowship in Prayer—our 40th anniversary year—is the gala dinner on June 5 at the Nassau Club in Princeton, New Jersey.

All readers of *Fellowship in Prayer* are invited to help us honor our cofounder, Kathryn G. Brown, and to affirm the power of prayer to bring about a better world for our children and grandchildren. Space is limited, so be sure to send in the coupon below, today!

GALA DINNER TO MARK FIP'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY

On June 5, 1990, Fellowship in Prayer will celebrate forty years of working "For a World United in Prayer" with a gala dinner at the Nassau Club in Princeton, New Jersey. Be sure to save the date—June 5, 1990—on your calendar.

RESERVATION DEADLINE: May 1, 1990 *COST PER PERSON*: $25.00

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MAIL TO: Fellowship in Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542, (609) 924-6863

A couple of years ago I came across your magazine in a church. I took a copy home and read it and wanted to read it regularly. I took advantage of your offer to send a free subscription to anyone who couldn't afford to pay.

After about a year of reading your publication I realized I *could* afford to pay for it—financially afford it, that is—and could have when I originally took the subscription. However, at the time that I took the first subscription, I was emotionally and spiritually bankrupt and didn't know how to provide for myself. Thank God that *you* did—by so generously offering a free subscription to *FiP* for anyone in need. That I was!

Eventually I began paying for my own subscription, and I sent extra to cover the cost of a subscription for someone who, like I had been once, was unable to pay. And then I sent even more money to pay for gift subscriptions for several friends.

Your free subscription has given me firsthand experience of the abundance mentality. I see how that single free subscription has grown into several paid ones for your publication. After reading the free copies of *FiP* for a year, I was no longer emotionally and spiritually bankrupt and was able to pass on what had been so freely given to me. I am grateful.

I pray that you will always handle free subscriptions the way you handled mine: by filling it, no questions asked. What a demonstration of faith that God will—and does—provide!

Sincerely, very sincerely,
Dodie Murphy Wagner; Plainsboro, NJ

Thank you more than words can say!
John Miller; Portland, OR

I have appreciated so much over the past several months Paul Walsh's writings and the meditations and articles on the care and healing of Mother Earth. I am going to request permission to reprint some of these materials in order to send them to members of the Franciscan Congregation to which I belong. I will request permission to offer them to our diocesan newspaper, also, in the hope they will print some to raise aware-

We welcome your comments. Please address them to The Editor, FiP, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542.

ness as we look forward to the Worldwide Day of Prayer and Meditation for the earth that you plan to hold in September. Hopefully this will help other people in this area of Indiana and beyond to come to know and support FiP.

Jane McConnell, OSF; Evansville, IN

Thank you for producing such a beautiful publication.

Leah Johnson; Washington, DC

For a year at least I've been mentally writing to you and FiP a note of love and appreciation and to tell you what a joy and a blessing it has been to receive *FiP*. *FiP* continues to be a blessing and a reassurance in a world gone so far awry and amok that I want to *shake* it into a realization of what we are doing to ourselves—and to *stop* it! And then along comes another issue of *FiP* and another reassurance that there are those who see, who do realize, who are doing something, and that there is a great force at work in the world that will bring about change—through prayer and the unity of all faiths through prayer. Gratefully, I add my own prayer to this great movement in the world toward the restoration of truth and light, peace and love.

Receiving FiP means so much to me that it has become a necessary part of my morning "quiet time," my prayer and meditation time, so much so that I don't ever want to be without it or to have anyone I know be without it. There are so many things for which I want to say "thank you," like your daughter, Tara's account in last October's issue of working in Appalachia. It was beautiful, and she is beautiful! Also June Moreau's poems, Angela's Parables, and Mary Young's "Birding as a Window."

Much love and success to you and to *FiP*.

Mary Alice Reid; Wheaton, IL

I wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for *FiP*. It is an oasis in a spiritual desert. Thank you!

Andrew Van Groll; Trinidad, CA

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We welcome articles on prayer, meditation, spiritual experience, religious faith or practices, and similar topics. Preference is given to experiential manuscripts. Manuscripts should not exceed 1500 words, should be typed, double spaced, and sent to The Editor, Fellowship In Prayer, 291 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ 08542. Please include a biography of no more than five lines.

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